



GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING DEPARTMENT PLAN

Athboy Community School

Academic Year: 2025 - 2026

Date of Ratification:

Review Date:

1. Introduction

1.1 School Context

Athboy Community School is committed to promoting the academic, personal, social, emotional and career development of every student within a caring, inclusive and student-centred environment. This Guidance & Counselling Department Plan operates within the wider pastoral and wellbeing structures of the school and reflects the collaborative approach outlined in the school's Care Policy.

The Guidance service contributes to a whole-school culture of support by working in partnership with senior management, the Care Team, Year Heads, tutors, subject teachers, the AEN Department, chaplaincy services, parents/guardians and external agencies. The service supports students through key educational transitions while also promoting resilience, self-awareness, informed decision-making and positive wellbeing.

1.2 Legislative & Policy Framework

This Guidance & Counselling Department Plan is developed in accordance with:

- Education Act 1998
 - Whole School Guidance Framework for Post-Primary Schools
 - Looking at Our School 2022
 - Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools
 - IGC Code of Ethics
 - Athboy Community School Care Policy
 - Wellbeing Policy
 - Anti-Bullying Policy
 - School Self Evaluation (SSE) priorities
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2. Vision, Aims & Objectives

2.1 Vision

The Guidance & Counselling Department seeks to provide a developmental and responsive guidance service that supports students in achieving their educational, personal and career potential.

2.2 Aims

The Guidance & Counselling Department aims to:

- Foster student wellbeing, confidence and resilience.
 - Support informed educational and career decision-making.
 - Provide timely intervention and referral pathways where required.
 - Promote inclusion, equity and access for all learners.
 - Contribute to a safe and supportive school environment.
 - Support successful student transitions throughout school life and beyond.
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2.3 Objectives

- All Third Year students will receive structured Senior Cycle subject choice guidance.
 - All Transition Year students will receive structured Senior Cycle subject choice guidance.
 - All Sixth Year students will receive at least one individual career planning meeting.
 - A developmental guidance programme will be delivered to each year group annually.
 - Student voice will inform annual guidance planning.
 - Post-school destination data will be collected and analysed annually.
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3. Whole School Guidance Framework

Guidance at Athboy Community School operates within a whole-school, student-centred model delivered through a continuum of support.

3.1 Continuum of Support

Guidance for All

- Timetabled guidance classes and wellbeing initiatives
- Career education and subject choice support
- Study skills and transition programmes
- Parent information evenings
- Wellbeing weeks and student voice initiatives

Guidance for Some

- Chaplain
- Psychotherapist
- Small group interventions
- Nurture and mentoring programmes
- Attendance and retention supports
- Targeted pathway planning
- Collaborative interventions through the Care Team

Guidance for a Few

- Individual counselling
 - Crisis intervention
 - Referrals to external agencies such as NEPS, CAMHS, Tusla and community services
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3.2 Whole-School Collaboration

The Guidance Counsellor participates in multidisciplinary collaboration through regular engagement with the Care Team and contributes to coordinated planning for vulnerable or at-risk students in line with GDPR and child protection procedures.

The Guidance Counsellor works in collaboration with:

- Principal and Senior Management
- Year Heads
- Wellbeing Team
- SPHE/RSE teachers
- AEN Department
- HSCL (where applicable)
- External agencies and local employers
- Further and Higher Education institutions

3.3 Student Wellbeing and School Culture

The Guidance Department contributes to the school's wellbeing culture through active participation in:

- Wellbeing Week initiatives
- Anti-bullying and positive behaviour supports
- Student voice and mentoring initiatives
- Transition programmes
- Critical incident response structures
- Programmes promoting resilience, connection and inclusion

The service supports the school's emphasis on positive relationships, restorative approaches and recognition of student strengths and achievements.

4. Guidance Provision by Year Group

4.1 Junior Cycle

First Year

- Transition to post-primary support
- Introduction to study skills
- Introduction to self-awareness and strengths

Second Year

- Study skills development
- Career exploration activities
- Introduction to subject awareness

Third Year

- Senior Cycle subject choice guidance
- Individual subject choice meetings where required
- Introduction to Senior Cycle pathways (Established LC, LCA, TY)

4.2 Senior Cycle

Transition Year

- Career interest inventories
- Work experience preparation and reflection
- Skills audits and portfolio development
- Guest speakers and career events

Fifth Year

- Goal setting and academic planning
- Introduction to CAO, PLC and Apprenticeship pathways
- Career research and labour market exploration

Sixth Year

- Individual career planning meetings
- CAO, HEAR, DARE, SUSI, National Learning Network and scholarship guidance
- PLC and apprenticeship application support
- Interview preparation workshops
- Exam stress management supports
- Post-school transition planning and course research

5. Individual Counselling Provision

5.1 Nature of Service

The Guidance Counsellor provides short-term counselling within professional and ethical boundaries. Areas of support may include:

- Anxiety and stress management
 - Emotional wellbeing
 - Peer or family concerns
 - Motivation and decision-making
 - School engagement and transitions
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5.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is maintained in line with:

- IGC Code of Ethics
- Child Protection Procedures
- GDPR requirements

Students are informed of the limits of confidentiality, particularly in matters relating to safeguarding.

5.3 Referral Pathways

Referrals may occur through:

- Student self-referral
- Parent/guardian referral
- Staff referral
- Senior Management referral

Where necessary, referrals are made to external services in consultation with parents/guardians.

6. Data-Informed Planning & Destinations Tracking

6.1 Data Collection

The Guidance Department gathers and analyses:

- CAO application and acceptance data
- PLC and apprenticeship progression data
- Employment destinations
- Retention and attendance data
- Student wellbeing survey results
- Subject uptake patterns
- Student feedback surveys

This information supports planning, programme evaluation and the identification of emerging student needs. Findings contribute to whole-school improvement planning and SSE processes.

6.2 Destinations Tracking

Athboy Community School tracks student destinations annually following Leaving Certificate completion.

Data analysis informs:

- Career education focus areas
- Equity of access initiatives
- Transition supports
- Future programme development

Findings are shared with Senior Management and contribute to school planning processes.

7. Student Voice & Stakeholder Engagement

7.1 Student Voice

Student feedback is gathered through:

- Annual guidance surveys
- Focus groups
- Student Council consultation
- Sixth Year exit surveys

Feedback informs programme development and review.

7.2 Parent Engagement

- Parent information evenings
 - Communication via school platforms
 - Feedback following events
 - Collaboration with the Parents' Association
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8. Time Allocation & Deployment

Athboy Community School receives an allocation of ex-quota Guidance hours in line with Department guidelines.

Deployment Overview

- Individual counselling: approximately 35%
- Career guidance (individual & group): approximately 25%
- Classroom guidance modules: approximately 20%
- Administration and data analysis: approximately 10%
- Parent engagement: approximately 5%
- CPD and supervision: approximately 5%

Allocation remains flexible to respond to emerging student needs.

9. Professional Practice

The Guidance Counsellor:

- Holds recognised qualifications in Guidance Counselling
- Sam Russell, Guidance Counsellor
- → *Postgraduate Diploma in Guidance & Counselling, NUI Maynooth, 2019*
- Participates in ongoing professional supervision.
- Engages in CPD through Oide and IGC.

Date	Training	Hours	Facilitator
6/5/26	TY Career Planning	1 hour	Synergy Careers
5/5/26	CAO Change of Mind	1 hour	Synergy Careers
28/4/26	Tertiary Courses	5 hours	Dunboyne College
22/4/26	Youth Unemployment	2 hours	National Youth College of Ireland
3/3/26	AI Interviewing	3 hours	Palantrix
25/11/25	Professional Diversity	5 hours	NUI Maynooth
23/9/25	Careers & Guidance Resources	2 hours	Synergy Careers

- Adheres to professional and ethical standards.
- Maintains reflective practice.

10. Link to School Self Evaluation (SSE)

Guidance contributes to Athboy Community School's SSE priorities, including:

- Student wellbeing
- Retention and progression
- Teaching and learning improvement
- Successful transitions

Guidance data informs annual review processes and school improvement planning.

11. Alignment with Looking at Our School 2022

Domain 1: Learner Outcomes

Developing resources so that evidence will include:

- Progression statistics
- Destinations tracking data
- Retention rates
- Student wellbeing indicators

Domain 2: Learner Experiences

Evidence includes:

- Developmental guidance programme
- Inclusive access to supports
- Student feedback data

Domain 3: Teachers' Individual Practice

Evidence includes:

- CPD record
- Professional supervision participation
- Ethical counselling practice

Domain 4: Teachers' Collective Practice

Evidence includes:

- Collaborative planning
- Whole-school wellbeing initiatives
- External agency engagement

12. Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

This plan will be:

- Reviewed annually by the Guidance Counsellor and Senior Management.
- Updated based on data and stakeholder feedback.
- Presented to the Board of Management for ratification.
- Revised in line with Department policy updates.

13. Appendices

- i. Referral Procedures
 - ii. Career Events Schedule
 - iii. External Agency Contacts
 - iv. Destinations Data Summary (In process of development and collection)
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i. Referral Procedures

Referrals may occur through:

- Student self-referral
- Parent/guardian referral
- Staff referral
- Senior Management referral

Where necessary, referrals are made to external services in consultation with parents/guardians.

Referrals may be made by staff through a confidential online Form which goes directly to the Guidance Department.

- The Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain and Psychotherapist then triage and assign a professional to link with each student referred

1	2	3
Low level of concern	Medium level of concern	High level of concern
Minimal support	Additional support	Specialist support
Self-referral	Staff referral	Referral to external services
Regular contact	Regular contact	Regular contact
Regular contact	Regular contact	Regular contact
Regular contact	Regular contact	Regular contact
Regular contact	Regular contact	Regular contact

Student Support Team Referral

Can Class Tutors please complete this form for any students who may require additional support

Section 1

Personal Information

1. Name of Student *

2. Year and Class Group *

ii. **Career Events Schedule 2025/2026**

17/9/25 - **Higher Options, RDS Dublin** (6th Years)

17/11/25 - **Careers Week** (Week-long activities, displays and lunchtime CV workshops)

4/3/26 - **O'Fiaich Institute of Further Education School Talk** (6th Years & LCA 1+2)

5/3/26 - **OFI Open Day** (6th Years, LCA 1 & relevant TYs)

6/3/26 – **NUI Maynooth School Talk** (6th Years & LCA 1+2)

12/3/26 - **Apprenticeship Expo** (6th Years & LCA 1)

19/3/26 - **Ballyhaise Agricultural College Open Day** (Interested students allowed to attend)

4/3/26 - **Dunboyne College of Further Education School Talk** (6th Years & LCA 1+2)

22/4/26 - **Cavan Institute of Further Education** (6th Years & LCA 1+2)

Date TBC - **NCAD Art Portfolio Workshop + DCG Progression Courses** (Select 5th Years)

iii. External Agency Contacts

Service	Area of Support	Telephone	Email	Website
<u>Jigsaw</u>	Youth Mental Health	01 472 7010	<u>info@jigsaw.ie</u>	National youth mental health service
<u>Jigsaw Meath</u>	Local Youth Mental Health Support	Contact via local service	<u>meath@jigsaw.ie</u>	Local support service for Meath region
<u>CAMHS</u>	Child & Adolescent Mental Health	Via local HSE services	Via local team	HSE mental health services
<u>NEPS</u>	Educational Psychology Support	Through assigned psychologist	Via Department of Education	Consultation, assessment & critical incidents
<u>Pieta</u>	Suicide & Self-Harm Support	1800 247 247 / 0818 111 126	<u>fundraising@pieta.ie</u>	Crisis intervention & therapy
<u>Samaritans Ireland</u>	Emotional Support	116 123	<u>jo@samaritans.ie</u>	24-hour listening service
<u>Childline / ISPCC</u>	Child & Youth Support	1800 66 66 66	<u>ispcc@ispcc.ie</u>	Listening and crisis support for young people
<u>Tusla Child & Family Agency</u>	Child Protection & Welfare	01 771 8500	<u>info@tusla.ie</u>	Child welfare and family supports
<u>TESS</u>	Attendance & Educational Welfare	Via local Tusla office	Via local office	Educational welfare services
<u>Barnardos Ireland</u>	Family & Therapeutic Supports	01 453 0355	<u>info@barnardos.ie</u>	Family support programmes
<u>Belong To</u>	LGBTQ+ Youth Support	01 670 6223	<u>info@belongto.org</u>	Inclusion and wellbeing supports
<u>Aware</u>	Depression & Mood Support	1800 80 48 48	<u>supportmail@aware.ie</u>	Mental health education and support
<u>Turn2Me</u>	Online Counselling	Online service	<u>support@turn2me.org</u>	Online mental health supports

Service	Area of Support	Telephone	Email	Website
<u>SpunOut</u>	Youth Information & Wellbeing	Online support	<u>info@spunout.ie</u>	Youth wellbeing information
<u>NCSE</u>	Additional Educational Needs	074 913 2466	<u>info@ncse.ie</u>	Educational inclusion supports
<u>AHEAD</u>	Disability Access to Higher Education	01 716 4396	<u>ahead@ahead.ie</u>	Transition supports to FE/HE
<u>AsIAM</u>	Autism Support & Advocacy	01 513 4196	<u>info@asiam.ie</u>	Autism advocacy and education
<u>Dyslexia Association Ireland</u>	Dyslexia Supports	01 877 6001	<u>mail@dyslexia.ie</u>	Learning support and advocacy
<u>Foróige</u>	Youth Development Programmes	01 630 1560	<u>info@foroige.ie</u>	Youth leadership and mentoring
<u>Crosscare Youth Services</u>	Youth & Family Supports	01 836 0011	<u>info@crosscare.ie</u>	Counselling and youth work
<u>Women's Aid</u>	Domestic Violence Support	1800 341 900	<u>helpline@womensaid.ie</u>	Safety and advocacy supports
<u>CyberSafeKids</u>	Online Safety Education	01 293 7040	<u>hello@cybersafekids.ie</u>	Internet safety supports
<u>CareersPortal</u>	Careers Information	01 440 2314	<u>guidance@careersportal.ie</u>	Career exploration platform
<u>CAO</u>	Higher Education Applications	091 509 800	<u>cao@cao.ie</u>	Third-level applications
<u>SUSI</u>	Student Grants	0818 888 777	<u>support@susi.ie</u>	Financial support for students
<u>Apprenticeship Ireland</u>	Apprenticeships	1800 794 487	<u>apprenticeship@solas.ie</u>	Apprenticeship pathways
<u>National Learning Network</u>	Supported Learning Programmes	1800 422 422	<u>info@nlm.ie</u>	Vocational and supported education

iv. **Destinations Data Summary (In process of development and collection)**

*Pending 2025 / 2026 survey returns